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70th plenary meeting
Monday, 6 December 1999, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Third report of the General Committee (A/54/250/Add.2)

Request for the inclusion of an additional item: note by the Secretary-General (A/54/236 and Add.1)

Request for the reopening of consideration of agenda item 15 (c): note by the Secretary-General (A/54/624)

The President: We turn first to the third report of the General Committee, contained in document A/54/250/Add.2. As indicated in its third report, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that an additional item, entitled "International recognition of the Day of Vesak", be included in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include that additional item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee further decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the additional item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly will next turn to a request submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/54/236 and Add.1. The Secretary-General has the honour to request, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-fourth session of an additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor". Owing to the nature of the item, the Secretary-General further requests that it be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

Unless there is any objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees that the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this item on the agenda, can be waived? I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General,

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wishes to include an additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor" in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, owing to the nature of the additional item, to allocate it to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken.

The Assembly will now turn to the request contained in the note by the Secretary-General circulated in document A/54/624. In his note, the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that, by a letter dated 19 November 1999, Judge Stephen Schwebel, President of the International Court of Justice, pursuant to article 13, paragraph 4 of the Statute of the Court, informed the Secretary-General of his resignation as a member of the Court effective 29 February 2000. Thus, a vacancy will occur on 29 February 2000.

Judge Schwebel was elected a member of the Court from 15 January 1981 and was re-elected as from 6 February 1988 and from 6 February 1997. His current term of office would have expired on 5 February 2006. In accordance with the terms of the Statute of the Court, the General Assembly and the Security Council will therefore have to elect a member of the Court to serve the remainder of Judge Schwebel's term. In order to enable the General Assembly to take the required action, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 15 (c).

May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to reopen consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 15 for the election of a member of the International Court of Justice?

It was so decided.

The President: As indicated in the Secretary-General's note, pursuant to article 14 of the Statute of the Court, the Security Council is to fix the date of the election. I should like to inform members that, by its resolution 1278 (1999) of 30 November 1999, the Security Council decided that the election to fill the vacancy would take place on 2 March 2000 at a meeting of the Security Council and at a meeting of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

Agenda item 30

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/537 and Corr.1)

Mr. Vollebaek (Norway): In his programme of reform for the United Nations, Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that regional organizations would "increasingly become partners of the United Nations in all activities related to the maintenance of international peace and security, including conflict-prevention" (A/51/950, para. 116). One of my primary objectives as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been to further develop the cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations.

The United Nations and the OSCE are natural partners. We share the same perspectives in our joint efforts to promote security and prosperity. During the past 10 years we have developed increasingly close cooperation in South-Eastern Europe, in the Caucasus and in Central Asia.

The complexity of the security problems of post-cold-war Europe means that no single institution, nor any single country, can deal with them on its own. In order to meet these challenges we must draw on the combined resources of all the institutions and cooperative arrangements we have at our disposal. We must also adapt the available instruments to constantly changing realities.

This issue was at the heart of the debate at the OSCE summit in Istanbul last month. We then had the honour of hearing an address by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in which he challenged us to contribute to the debate he launched earlier this year on ways to reconcile respect for national sovereignty with the need to prevent violations of international humanitarian law.

The OSCE has responded to this challenge. The Charter on European adopted by the summit reaffirms the full adherence of the participating States to the Charter of the United Nations, as well as to basic OSCE commitments undertaken previously, including the

principle of the territorial integrity of the participating States. But at the same time, it underscores that threats to security and stability can stem from conflicts within as well as between States. The Charter furthermore reiterates that there is no such thing as internal affairs when commitments in the human dimension are being violated. On the contrary, such violations are of legitimate concern to all OSCE states.

Underlying the debate were, of course, the recent events in the Balkans, particularly in Kosovo, and the more recent developments in Chechnya. I was pleased to note that the Summit Declaration, while reaffirming the territorial integrity of Russia and condemning terrorism, also underscored the need to respect OSCE norms. There was agreement on the importance of alleviating the suffering of the civilian population. Not least, there was agreement on the need for a political solution to the conflict and that the OSCE could be helpful in promoting a dialogue to that end.

As follow-up to the Istanbul Summit Declaration, the Russian Federation now has agreed to a visit to the region by the Chairman-in-Office on 14 and 15 December. The purpose of this visit will be twofold: first, to carry out a broad assessment of the situation in the region, and secondly, to consider ways in which the OSCE could help in alleviating the humanitarian crisis. In the latter regard we will continue to cooperate closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Since last June the situation in Kosovo has been our greatest joint challenge. While problems certainly remain, the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE within the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) framework has greatly enhanced our ability to meet this challenge. The scope of this United Nations-OSCE cooperation is unprecedented. It clearly represents a milestone in the evolution of the relationship between our two organizations.

The institution-building being carried out by the OSCE is crucial to our vision of a stable, multi-ethnic Kosovo. Police training is particularly important. There must be a credible multi-ethnic police force if the people of Kosovo are to believe in our promise to build a society based on the rule of law.

Today in Pristina, the OSCE made public two reports. The first documents massive human rights violations and atrocities against Kosovo Albanians between October 1998 and June this year. The second report deals with human rights infringements and violence between June and October this year — much of this violence perpetrated against Serbs, Roma and other minorities.

I am deeply concerned about this continuing spiral of ethnically motivated violence. This spiral must be broken. If not, our efforts to build lasting stability in the province will come to nought. We must continue to insist that security for the individual can be achieved only through reconciliation. The Kosovo Albanians have a particular responsibility in this regard. However, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must also publicly accept responsibility for atrocities committed by Serbs. Violence only begets more violence. Reconciliation is the only way forward.

Preparing for and carrying out elections is one of the most difficult issues facing us. Our aim must be for elections to be held as soon as possible. But they must not take place before they can satisfy basic international standards, thus ensuring that the outcome is accepted by the whole population. If not, we risk undermining the stability we are trying to build. Drawing up a civil registry and a credible list of voters is a particularly urgent part of the preparations for the elections. This is a joint challenge for the United Nations and the OSCE. We can meet this challenge only through joint action.

The cooperation between the OSCE and the Central Asian States has been significantly enhanced. The OSCE is in the process of implementing a strategy designed to support and sustain reform in that region. A hallmark of this strategy is to engage all the international organizations that are already active in the area in a comprehensive process aimed at supporting reform. The United Nations and its agencies are particularly important in this regard. Our partnership with the Central Asian nations must be based on a balanced approach and a comprehensive concept of security. Due attention must be paid to economic development and environmental concerns, as well as to human rights and fundamental freedoms and the development of sustainable democratic institutions.

The OSCE will continue to support the United Nations in Abkhazia, Georgia. We are ready to work together on a document addressing the distribution of constitutional competence between the central authorities and the authorities of Abkhazia. We have proposed sending a fact-finding mission to the Gali district early next year in cooperation with the United Nations. The aim of this mission will be to provide a basis for the

unconditional and safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and to contribute to general stability in the area.

The Charter on European Security adopted by the recent OSCE summit in Istanbul essentially aims to do two things. First, it sets out to further strengthen the conflict-prevention and crisis-management capabilities of the OSCE. In this regard, the Charter represents an important step in the right direction, although much remains to be done, particularly with regard to early warning of conflicts. Secondly, the Charter on European Security will facilitate closer cooperation with other international organizations, such as the United Nations, by building on recent experience from the Balkans and elsewhere. It is my hope that the new form of cooperation we now see developing in Europe can also serve as a model for other parts of the world. I therefore would welcome a dialogue between the United Nations and regional organizations in general on how such cooperation could be developed on a global basis.

The partnership between the United Nations and the OSCE will continue to evolve. We will continue to enhance the mutually reinforcing nature of our cooperation. As the effectiveness of the OSCE increases, the United Nations will be able to leave more of the responsibility for Europe to the OSCE. This does not mean that the United Nations will or should renounce its responsibility for speaking for and acting on behalf of the international community. There will still be situations that can be dealt with only by the United Nations and the Security Council. But the OSCE will increasingly be in a position to make important contributions to security and stability, acting on behalf of or in support of the United Nations, but also on its own. This will enable the United Nations to concentrate more of its attention and resources on conflict management in parts of the world where regional frameworks are not as well developed as in Europe.

Mr. Jusys (Lithuania): Lithuania will align itself with the statement of the European Union that will follow immediately after our statement. Nevertheless, I requested the floor to convey the Lithuanian perspective both on the general issue of model cooperation between the United Nations and a regional arrangements, and on the specific issue for us as a European State.

But first I would like to highly commend the contribution of Norway, the outgoing Chairman-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and especially the outstanding record of the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Mr. Knut Vollebaek, whom we also thank for the statement he has just delivered.

Lithuania welcomes the incoming chairmanship of Austria, which will steer that unique regional organization from the junction of centuries onwards. We welcome the presence today of Mr. Jan Kubis, Secretary-General of the OSCE. European States also owe special gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Giancarlo Aragona, for his efficient management of the organization.

Regional bodies are often better equipped to take on regional issues than global organizations are. Without prejudice to relevant legal norms, such as the mandate of the Security Council, the advantages of intimate knowledge of a region must be heeded when selecting among international institutions for an instrument to take action in a region.

Europe is endowed with numerous establishments of various types, mandates, expertise and membership. Reliance on them, including on the OSCE, to uphold universal values on the continent has been productive. The Charter on European Security, adopted at the recent Istanbul summit, acknowledges that "the risks and challenges we face today cannot be met by a single State or organization".

That is true for Europe and worldwide. European organizations perform skillfully in the fields of their comparative advantage in the Balkans, the Caucasus or Central Asia. Lithuanian nationals who have participated in many multilateral projects around Europe have witnessed successful inter-institutional cooperation. The United Nations Secretary-General's report demonstrates that Chapter VIII of the Charter is understood and practiced wisely and efficiently.

The OSCE is a strong and reliable pillar of the United Nations in Europe. The organization submits its assistance to uphold universal values and principles through its Platform for Cooperative Security, which is also a flexible framework for a non-hierarchical interaction between the OSCE and other European organizations.

The Istanbul Summit has had a meaningful outcome. It was overshadowed by developments in the northern Caucasus, and they are indeed unfortunate. OSCE member States, including the Russian Federation, have agreed that a political solution on Chechnya is essential and that the OSCE will contribute towards that goal. We

hope for a renewal of political dialogue with the help of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya and expect results from the visit of the Chairman-in-Office to the region. In the background of these difficult events, however, fundamental developments and real achievements in the OSCE's role in Europe should not be overlooked.

The newly adopted Charter for European Security is not only a new model for European security and stability for the next century; this document is also very progressive in its substance and strong with 54 signatures from the vast array of member States. Although negotiations on the Charter preceded new trends in international relations that have surfaced in the last year of this century, its adoption coincided with the major wave that swept around the world and over State borders. The Charter affirms what was said by the United Nations Secretary-General and many delegations here at the United Nations — namely, that certain issues previously considered unquestionably to be States' prerogatives now fall within a wider purview: that of everyone. The Charter will help the OSCE to be a modern organization able to meet challenges with a new philosophy and good tools. Being a regional product but primarily comprised of universal principles, the Charter for European Security is potentially marketable in other regions and continents.

The United Nations and the OSCE, whose security dimension is based on confidence-building policies of conventional arms control, transparency in armaments and information-sharing, can complement one another in response to security challenges. The degree of cooperation within the OSCE in the sphere of arms and weapons transparency, now improved through the updated Vienna Document, can be exemplary to the United Nations, and through the United Nations to other regions of the world. The decision to launch a comprehensive discussion within the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation on the issue of small arms and light weapons is concurrent with the preparation for the United Nations 2001 conference on small arms and light weapons, as is the decision of the OSCE to fight the tragedy of children in armed conflicts with its own measures. Yet another very significant development is the decision of the Istanbul Summit to develop operational capacities of the OSCE to prevent conflicts.

Although a product of the cold war, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) has retained its relevance in today's Europe, especially by breaking up weapons' limitation from blocs to individual States. The adaptation of the Treaty and its opening for accession to other OSCE States was accompanied by commitments of a number of Central and Eastern European States to irreversibly set reasonable ceilings for their own conventional forces. This was a particularly welcome development in the neighbourhood of my country. The updated CFE Treaty is the kind of instrument that will maintain balance in other regions of the planet where cold and hot wars still flare.

Through many documents of the OSCE Human Dimension, signed at the highest level, beginning with the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, Europeans are bound by advanced and still-developing standards of democracy, rule of law and human rights. The OSCE is a living organization wherein stricter standards, new norms and stronger enforcement mechanisms are being devised.

We salute the cooperation on the Human Dimension between a number of international organizations in Europe and beyond, such as the regular exchanges of information and joint actions between the United Nations, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Kosovo will be a case in point for a long time. Cooperation between multilateral institutions, beyond their deliberative chambers and the ability to prove complementarity in the field, is especially meaningful. The parallel share of work and responsibility in the field between the two organizations and their internal and affiliated institutions — such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and its High Commissioner on National Minorities — especially in the countries of the Caucasus, the former Yugoslavia and Central Asia, reveal an orderly and full-fledged cooperation, rather than mere paperwork or random movements in hot spots. We strongly encourage this development.

Unique in their own way, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe together make a mutually complementary part of multilateral instruments for contacts among peoples in Europe and around the world. We ought to make the best use of these potent tools. We are convinced that the draft resolution which Norway intends to introduce will invite us to do precisely that and will deserve a consensus approval.

Ms. Rasi (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European

Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries members of the European Economic Area (EEA), Iceland and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to welcome Mr. Jan Kubis, the new Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Ambassador Kubis, a former Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, personifies the strong bonds of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

The OSCE is simultaneously transatlantic, pan-European and Euro-Asian. Over the past quarter of a century, it has played a central role in promoting peace, security and stability in a vast region stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. It has become a key forum for the management of the changes that have occurred, especially in Europe, after the cold war.

The European Union has been a major contributor, both financially and in terms of personnel, to the activities of the OSCE and will continue to be. We remain committed to its enhanced political effectiveness and to strengthening its operational capability. We support the role of the OSCE as a primary instrument of early warning, conflict prevention and mediation, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in the region.

Further strengthening of the OSCE will enable it to assume better its responsibilities as a regional organization, as defined in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Therefore, the Union welcomes the adoption of the Charter for European Security at the Istanbul Summit on 18 and 19 November 1999. The Charter reaffirms the status of the OSCE as an inclusive forum for cooperative security and reinforces its capacity for performing its tasks and cooperating with other international actors, especially the United Nations. We welcome in particular the planned measures to strengthen the operational capacities of the OSCE secretariat, including its crisis-response capabilities.

The strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is visible in a series of operations and endeavours that the United Nations and the OSCE are undertaking jointly and consecutively. The Union continues to lend its support to OSCE field missions and acknowledges that their increased activity is a major element in the evolution of the OSCE in the past few years.

In no other place has the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE been as tangible as in Kosovo. The European Union appreciates the work accomplished, until its withdrawal, by the Kosovo Verification Mission for the monitoring of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1199 (1998). Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), the OSCE has been playing an essential role in United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo in the fields of institution-building, democratization, human rights, media, elections and training of judges, police and local administrators in the province. The United Nations civil administration in Kosovo represents an unprecedented project in coordination between international organizations and institutions.

The Union continues to support OSCE-led activities under the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cooperation between the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the OSCE for the implementation of peace accords continues to be exemplary. The European Union also supports the role played by the OSCE in Albania and actively cooperated with the OSCE by jointly chairing the Group of Friends of Albania. It supports the OSCE mission in Croatia, which took over police-monitoring in Eastern Slavonia from the United Nations.

In order to achieve stability in South-Eastern Europe as a whole, the European Union launched the Stability Pact, which is designed to seek broad-based and sustainable solutions to issues related to democracy, human rights, economic reconstruction and security. The Pact has been placed under the auspices of the OSCE.

The European Union remains deeply concerned by unresolved regional problems in the Transcaucasus and will work towards a resolution of conflicts in the region in support of United Nations and OSCE efforts. The European Union fully backs the work of the OSCE's Minsk Group concerning Nagorny Karabakh. We encourage the parties to intensify their efforts towards a peaceful, global and lasting settlement in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Conference.

In Georgia, the continuing violent incidents in Abkhazia are deeply worrying. The European Union fully supports the efforts undertaken by the United Nations

within the framework of the Geneva peace process to engage the parties in a direct dialogue. The European Union encourages closer cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations in the area. In South Ossetia, the European Union supports the efforts undertaken by the OSCE mission to reach a settlement in the conflict. The European Union is particularly encouraged by the resumption of the peace settlement process.

The Union welcomes the initiative taken by OSCE-participating States, including several European Union countries, to provide assistance in the liquidation of Russian ammunition and equipment depots on the territory of Moldova. The European Union regrets that there has been no substantive progress in defining the status of the Transdniester region. The European Union appreciates the continuation of the mediation efforts of the OSCE mission to Moldova, as well as of the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The European Union welcomes the commitment by the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from the territory of Moldova.

The European Union commends the efforts of the United Nations in Central Asia, especially in support of the peace process in Tajikistan. The Union also welcomes the OSCE's more active role in the region.

It supports the OSCE's enhanced focus on fully integrating the States of Central Asia in a community of values based on democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the commitment to preserve peace and stability in the OSCE region. It is the view of the European Union that the recent events in the region underline the necessity of more intense political dialogue on regional security and confidence-building, as well as the development of a more comprehensive approach to security.

The European Union attaches importance to cooperation between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation and stresses the mutual interdependence between the OSCE region and neighbouring areas. Furthermore, the European Union appreciates the consistent, constructive role that the Partners for Cooperation, as well as Japan and the Republic of Korea, are playing in the OSCE.

The human dimension in cooperative security should continue to be developed. The Union places special emphasis on the rights of persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities, including Roma and Sinti, and the preservation of the multi-ethnic character of societies in all circumstances. The European Union emphasizes the importance of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media. On this occasion I would like to sincerely thank Ambassador Max van der Stoel for his work and welcome his readiness to continue as High Commissioner on National Minorities for an additional year.

I would like to pay tribute to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Knut Vollebaek. As Chairman-in-Office of OSCE, he and his team have faced an unusually demanding chairmanship this year, but the Norwegian chairmanship has been able to steer the organization through the challenges with great skill.

Finally, we look forward to working closely with the delegation of the incoming Chairman-in-Office, Austria. We can rest assured that the OSCE will be in good hands in the year 2000.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): It is widely recognized that the risks and challenges to security in today's world are so complex and multifaceted that no organization is capable of dealing with them exclusively on its own. Hence, close cooperation between different actors in the international arena and their coordinated actions are a prerequisite for an effective response by the international community to existing and new challenges and conflicts.

In this context, Ukraine notes with satisfaction that cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is dynamically increasing every year in various fields and has become an important factor of global and regional stability. As a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE has developed into a major United Nations partner in the region.

The Secretary General's report presented in document A/54/537 has provided us with numerous convincing examples of efficient and coordinated activities of the two organizations, both at the headquarters level and in terms of concrete collaboration in the field. The report also leads us to the conclusion that this cooperation should be further developed on the principles of inter-reinforcement and effective complementary actions based on division of labour, with maximum use of the comparative advantages of the two organizations.

We believe that both organizations must continue to focus on key issues, such as preventive diplomacy and settlement of conflicts, post-conflict rehabilitation, protection of human rights, rights of ethnic minorities and displaced persons and fundamental freedoms.

This past year we have witnessed increasing cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in the field of conflict management. In our view, such cooperation between the two organizations has entered a qualitatively new phase, specifically in the field of post-conflict peace-building activities. First of all, it relates to a new form of interaction within the framework of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), where the OSCE is in charge of the third pillar. In fact, this is the first experience in such closely integrated efforts of the two organizations.

It is recognized that the OSCE is responsible for some extremely challenging and sensitive aspects of UNMIK's efforts — institution-building, human rights, the democratization process, mass media and, probably most important, the organizing of elections. In this endeavour, the OSCE component of UNMIK is closely collaborating with other pillars of the United Nations mission. Joint assessments of the situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo prepared by the OSCE and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a good example of such cooperation.

This brand-new type of ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in Kosovo gives us a vantage point for observing the positive trend of shifting from the principle of mutual complementarity in common efforts in the peace process to the principle of mutual interdependence.

At the same time, we maintain that the forms of cooperation between the two organizations based on the pursuit of parallel and coordinated efforts, such as in the current peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or the full transfer of functions, as happened last year in the Danube region of Croatia, should be continued.

As a pan-European and trans-Atlantic security organization, the OSCE has become a key forum for the management of the changes that have occurred in Europe in recent years. This was convincingly proved by the results of the OSCE summit held last month in Istanbul, Turkey, where the Charter on European Security was adopted. We consider that document to be a platform for all-embracing and cooperative security for Europe in the twenty-first century, the core of which will be equal partnership cooperation between the leading security organizations of the European continent, with active United Nations involvement.

We believe that decisive positive changes will be achieved very soon in the stabilization of the situation in the Balkans, in Nagorny Karabakh of Azerbaijan, in Abkhazia and South Ossetia of Georgia, and in the Transdnester region of the Republic of Moldova.

Ukraine attaches great importance to the issues related to forced migration, refugees and displaced persons. The joint efforts undertaken by UNCHR and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to help Ukraine solve the citizenship issues of formerly deported people returning to their original homeland in the Crimea is another source of satisfaction for my delegation in the context of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

We are satisfied that the fruitful activities of UNHCR, ODIHR, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Ukraine, as well as our country's relevant contribution to this end, is properly reflected in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly.

The OSCE experience in the sphere of conflict management shows that the majority of conflicts in the OSCE area stem from separatist movements caused by the lack of respect for or violations of national minority rights. Some, although not many, of the OSCE member States, including Ukraine, have successfully managed to settle the inter-ethnic problems and have obtained considerable experience in this field. Such unique experience should be used in the relevant spheres of OSCE activities. Therefore, during the Istanbul summit of the OSCE, the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, proposed establishing an ethnic-related-issues research centre in Ukraine, subordinate to the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

We believe that this initiative could be implemented within the framework of the OSCE project coordinator in Ukraine. The relevant office has all the necessary facilities and could be fully authorized by the OSCE and the Government of Ukraine to start this project in our country with a subsequent transformation into a full-scale institution.

In conclusion, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Norway for the remarkable and efficient

manner in which it has executed its responsibilities as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office during 1999. Let me also offer our best wishes to Austria, which is about to take over this important mission next year.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): On behalf of the delegation of Kazakhstan, I should like first of all to thank the Secretary-General for his substantive report (A/54/537) on the agenda item now before us. I should also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the delegation of Norway, as the country chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and to Mr. Knut Vollebaek for his active and fruitful work as OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

Maintaining stability in Europe requires the coordination of international efforts through the appropriate United Nations and OSCE machinery. The adoption of the Charter on European Security at the Istanbul summit was, in our view, an enormous contribution to building a solid and reliable foundation for stability and security throughout the OSCE area. That charter has reaffirmed the commitment of OSCE States members to the Charter of the United Nations and has therefore strengthened the framework for further cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. The acknowledgement in the Charter on European Security of the United Nations Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and of its key role in ensuring security and stability in the region, in our view, enhances the equilibrium of the multipolar world.

For its part, the OSCE is tangibly expanding its contribution to making and keeping global peace. This contribution encompasses activities in early warning and preventive diplomacy, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation and arms control and disarmament.

The issue of adapting the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe to the new circumstances is, in our opinion, a particularly urgent and significant one.

We welcome and support a further strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE on many levels, covering the broadest spectrum of problems. Kazakhstan considers cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme, the other bodies of the United Nations system and the various OSCE institutions to be extremely important.

The sphere of activity of the OSCE extends far beyond the geographical boundaries of Europe. The countries of Central Asia are making their contribution to maintaining security throughout the OSCE area, giving real substance to the concept of Eurasian security. Central Asia is a unique outpost of Europe in the face of such new threats as uncontrolled migration, the growing traffic in drugs, organized crime, religious extremism and terrorism.

Kazakhstan attaches particular importance to both the European and the Asian vectors of security. In Almaty on 14 September this year, after seven years of talks and discussion, the first meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Asian States members of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (A/54/368) took place, with representatives of 16 countries attending. The heads of the Ministries for Foreign Affairs signed the Declaration on principles guiding relations among the States members of the Conference, thereby laying for the first time in history the foundations for a security system for Asia. We should like to express our gratitude to the OSCE Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Kubis, who participated in the forum and expressed his support for this initiative by Kazakhstan.

In our view, coordination of OSCE programmes for Central Asia along all three policy lines of the Organization's work — political, economic and human — is an important issue. We welcome the development of a special United Nations programme for the economies of Central Asia along the lines of the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, with participation by the OSCE centres.

Cooperation between the OSCE and the countries of Central Asia has significantly expanded in all dimensions, as the Istanbul Summit Declaration noted. We welcome the importance which that document attaches to addressing the economic and environmental risks to the region's security, such as issues related to water resources, energy and erosion.

The process of interaction between the OSCE and Kazakhstan is becoming more robust. The memorandum of understanding signed in Oslo by the Government of Kazakhstan and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has enabled us to begin implementing programmes to help develop and strengthen democratic institutions in Kazakhstan. We are convinced that

expanding our interaction with the OSCE will help reinforce security and stability in our region on the basis of the fundamental, universal and democratic values, principles and obligations of the OSCE, taking into account the specific national features and traditions of our country and its political and social experience. Kazakhstan is actively promoting the development of a Central Asian direction in the activities of the OSCE.

Kazakhstan, a country where people of over 100 ethnic groups live, attaches great importance to the work of the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. We are grateful for the positive assessment which the High Commissioner, during his recent visit to our country, gave to our experience in maintaining inter-ethnic conciliation.

This year has been marked by two events of particular importance for my country. First, we had the first direct, contested elections for the office of President, for which there were four candidates. Secondly, there were free elections for the Parliament, with candidates from various parties for the first time. The elections were monitored by a large number of international observers, and the electoral law had been significantly improved. Throughout this whole process, the OSCE provided vital assistance.

We would like to point out that for a country that only eight years ago started consistently and patiently building its liberal institutions, we have made enormous and significant progress. That is why we expect a properly balanced assessment and understanding of the difficulties involved in reforming a society in transition, as ours is. Kazakhstan is open to dialogue and cooperation with the various institutions of the OSCE and is thoroughly intent on carrying out the serious work of rooting the transformations in our country more deeply. In October this year, we hosted a large and representative delegation headed by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. The important thing, in our view, was that during that visit we achieved a common understanding of the process of democratization in Kazakhstan as both serious and irreversible.

Kazakhstan wholeheartedly concurs with the concept accepted in the OSCE of common, comprehensive and indivisible security and an integral area of security free of dividing lines, in keeping with the fundamental principles and purposes of the United Nations. We therefore advocate further cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE towards this end.

Mr. Tomka (Slovakia): At the outset, let me thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Knut Vollebaek, for his tireless efforts, in his capacity as the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to bring peace and stability to Europe, as well as for his contribution to this debate. I would also like to welcome Mr. Jan Kubis, Secretary-General of the OSCE, whose presence at this plenary meeting of the General Assembly underscores the importance of the cooperation between the two organizations.

Slovakia fully supports and has aligned itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. Allow me now to make a few additional comments.

The collapse of the bipolar world and significant political changes in Europe during the last decade brought about new challenges hardly expected in the early post-cold-war euphoria. At that time, only a few pessimists could have anticipated what horrendous crimes against humanity, mass killings, genocide and ethnic hatred Europe was about to witness. Yet those words became commonplace in descriptions of the situation on the ground in some parts of Europe during the 1990s.

Europe is a continent of contrasts. While its western part has been enjoying democracy and prosperity for decades, the rest of the continent has been facing the harsh legacy of the one-party regimes of the past as well as social problems stemming from inefficient economics and inadequacies. At the same time, a colourful variety of languages and diverse cultural and religious traditions make Europe a unique and attractive place. Unfortunately, ethnic differences have turned out to be a very handy tool for some individuals and groups to misuse in order to reach their short-sighted political goals. The complexity of political realities in some parts of Europe requires the comprehensive and coordinated approach of the international community. The developments in the Balkans, which have produced humanitarian crises of enormous magnitude, have shown that no State or international organization, whether global or regional, is capable of dealing with or handling this kind of problem alone. Regional organizations can significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security if their activities and their relationship with the United Nations are based on effective coordination and complementarity. Creating a new comprehensive security model for Europe is a common

responsibility of every actor involved, and the OSCE has proved to be an important element in this regard.

Slovakia welcomes the Declaration and the Charter on European Security adopted at the OSCE summit held in Istanbul, Turkey, last month. The summit clearly demonstrated the will of all OSCE members to promote peace and stability in the region. The OSCE Charter on European Security should contribute to further strengthening the OSCE role in conflict prevention and crisis management. At this juncture, I would like to stress particularly the platform for cooperative security — the document creating a flexible framework for coordination and cooperation between the OSCE and other international organizations.

My delegation welcomes the latest report of the Secretary-General (A/54/537) on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, which gives proof of the fact that cooperation in the field has intensified during the past year. We encourage the Secretariat to continue to practise a division of labour based on the comparative advantages of the two organizations and to further improve consultation and cooperation in the field and between the respective headquarters in order to make better use of the resources of the international community in the interests of the countries being assisted.

We believe that the human dimension is a main asset of the OSCE's expertise, and we support the role of the OSCE as a primary instrument in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in the OSCE region. The cooperation between the two organizations has been very useful in these areas, particularly in the Balkans and in some of the countries of the former Soviet Union.

We encourage the United Nations Secretariat to continue to work with representatives of regional organizations, including the OSCE, towards establishing specific modalities for early warning and conflict prevention within the context of a follow-up to the third meeting of the heads of regional organizations devoted to conflict prevention. The potential in this respect has not yet been fully utilized. Member States and the OSCE should be encouraged to share early warning information with the United Nations, thus providing the Security Council with the opportunity to take timely action based on an accurate assessment of the situation on the ground.

Since a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building is of growing importance, I wish to commend the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for the timely preparation of the suggested principles and mechanisms on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in a peacekeeping environment, released last March. Through this study, a number of common concerns were identified. I believe that this manual is highly relevant to, for example, the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in the Balkans, and that it should become an integral part of the deliberations with regard to the planning and implementation of future joint peacekeeping missions of the two organizations.

My delegation also supports the effort of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, and his 10-point agenda for dialogue with the OSCE. I share his sentiments and I am pleased to learn that the OSCE Declaration and Charter on European Security, adopted at the Istanbul summit, reflect the commitment of all OSCE members to promote the protection, rights and welfare of children in the work of the organization.

In order to meet the challenges that lie ahead, Slovakia believes that the coordination between the United Nations and the OSCE could also be strengthened in the future in some other areas where new security threats lie — in international crime and illicit drug trafficking and in the fight against organized crime and terrorism.

Peace-building in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, is an extremely demanding task of unprecedented scale. The international community cannot afford to lose this battle, since its outcome will set a very important precedent for the future. Slovakia fully supports Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), establishing an international civil presence in Kosovo. The civil administration component led by the United Nations and the OSCE-led institution-building component bear testimony to the complementarity of the two organizations and the advantages that stem from a rational division of labour based on their respective strengths.

Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. For example, responsibility for rebuilding the justice system in Kosovo is shared between the two components. While the United Nations has created a judicial affairs office that deals with the court system, the prosecution service and the correctional system in Kosovo, the OSCE

Rule of Law Division — which is part of the Rule of Law and Human Rights Department — is tasked with developing mechanisms to ensure that the police, courts, administrative structures and other judicial structures are operating in accordance with international standards of criminal justice and human rights. The Rule of Law Division is further divided into a judicial support unit, a training unit and a legal monitoring unit. The OSCE also assists the United Nations within the civil affairs component, most notably by collecting and reviewing applications for all positions within the justice system.

This institutional set-up appears to be complex and, to some, confusing. There some are indications of frustration at what is perceived by some as gaps between the various agencies involved and the difficulty of pinning down who is responsible when problems and questions arise. Furthermore, the practice up to now suggests that some kind of rivalry between the two organizations persists. We fully agree with the Secretary-General, who, in his report on the work of the Organization, stressed that conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacemaking must not become areas of competition between the United Nations and regional organizations. They work together best when they respect each other's prerogatives and sensitivities.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today's discussion is taking place against the backdrop of the major political outcomes of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Istanbul summit, which laid down the basic guidelines for the formation of a stable architecture for security and cooperation on the European continent in the twenty-first century on the basis of the United Nations Charter and generally recognized principles of international law. The summit's most important decision was the adoption of a Charter on European Security, which is a kind of code of conduct for member States of the OSCE that reaffirms their commitment to the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, as well as their preparedness to base their relations on a spirit of partnership and mutual assistance.

It is a matter of primary importance that, pursuant to the Charter, European Security cooperation among the various organizations in the OSCE region should be developed in accordance with the fundamental principles of the United Nations and the OSCE, and on the basis of transparency and predictability of action. By enhancing and strengthening the central role of the OSCE in crisis settlement and post-conflict peace-building in the Euro-Atlantic area, the Charter on European Security provides serious momentum for strengthening the operational potential of the OSCE and for establishing it as a full-fledged regional organization, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

An enhanced OSCE can better fulfil its potential as the leading regional partner of the United Nations and make a weightier contribution to the development of practical cooperation between these international organizations. Such cooperation must continue to be based on key activities of the international community, first and foremost among which are promoting the prevention and settlement of conflicts, peacekeeping and ensuring the humanitarian aspects of security and development, including respect for human rights and the rights of national minorities, refugees and displaced persons.

One of the priority areas in the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE remains the building of a pan-European potential for peacekeeping, including the development of a normative base that includes the inviolability of the major responsibility of the Security Council for maintaining international peace and security.

A notable increase recently in the involvement of the OSCE in the settlement of regional crises and conflicts makes more relevant the task of improving the peacekeeping potential of that organization, which must proceed in close cooperation with the United Nations, which has a wealth of experience, and on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is important that cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE remain flexible and be based on principles of mutual strengthening and complementarity, with maximum use of the relative advantages of each of the organizations and a rational division of work among them.

The past year has been marked by substantial progress in deepening the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE, including an enhanced coordination of their efforts in resolving such crucial issues as the strengthening of their institutional relations on the basis of the framework agreement of 1993.

Russia has consistently supported the development of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in efforts to resolve a number of conflicts in the region of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which is designed to strengthen the existing and time-tested negotiation formats. We welcome the growing support of

the OSCE for the final stages of the peace process in Tajikistan. We note also the contribution of the OSCE to the efforts to reach a settlement in the Nagorny Karabakh and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts.

Cooperation between the two organizations is developing in a traditional, fruitful and dynamic manner in the Balkan region. At this stage the focus of their attention is on the joint efforts under way, in the framework of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to promote progress in the Kosovo settlement on the basis of full compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). In discharging its important and independent mandate in the context of that Mission, the OSCE is called upon to promote, in close coordination with the United Nations, the realization of the principal objective of the international community, as set out in Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) — the building of a stable, multi-ethnic Kosovo as a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by ensuring the necessary conditions of safety for all of the inhabitants of the area.

The successful completion of this task will directly determine the prospects for maintaining stability in the Balkans and in Europe as a whole. It will be necessary in future to support constructive contacts between the OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the relevant United Nations structures in carrying out such vital tasks as safeguarding the rights of minorities, resolving the problem of refugees and ensuring the effective functioning of the federal and municipal authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. An important contribution of the OSCE to the Bosnian peace process will be its active participation in the organization and holding of elections in Bosnia next year.

A solid basis has been established for further contacts between the OSCE and the relevant specialized agencies of the United Nations system in the social, economic and humanitarian fields.

Russia will continue consistently to promote the enhancement of the outcome of the interaction between the United Nations and the OSCE in order to strengthen global and regional security and cooperation.

Mr. Botnaru (Republic of Moldova): At the outset, I would like to underline that the delegation of the Republic of Moldova fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Finland, on behalf of the European Union, on the item on our agenda today.

My delegation is pleased to join others in welcoming to this plenary meeting Mr. Jan Kubis, the new Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), whom I had the privilege to meet and to work with in Prague in 1992, at a time of crucial importance for my country. His presence here today underscores the importance of the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

As a member of both organizations, the Republic of Moldova welcomes the fact that during the past year the United Nations and the OSCE have further intensified their cooperation and the coordination of their activities, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/537).

The various joint activities and missions undertaken in 1999 by the two organizations in different fields of cooperation, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, have made an essential contribution to the strengthening of peace, security and stability in the OSCE region. The progress recently achieved in Kosovo was also the result of the fruitful and extensive cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

While no single activity of the OSCE stands out as being of dramatic importance in the history of post-cold-war international relations in the OSCE region, what is perhaps most significant is the cumulative impact that its literally hundreds of activities have had on some of the most troubled and explosive regions of the world, especially during the last decade of the twentieth century. The OSCE promotes such values as democratization and the rule of law and has managed to link these issues and those of security in a unique fashion. It has also done much to contribute to transparency on such issues as military exercises and budgets.

The implementation of the important decisions made at the recent OSCE Istanbul summit will considerably consolidate the OSCE's capabilities in the field of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, thus enabling the organization to fulfil better its responsibilities as a regional organization along the lines of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

In this context, the Republic of Moldova expresses its satisfaction at the adoption of the Charter for European Security. The Platform for Cooperative Security, adopted as a core concept of the Charter,

provides an excellent framework for closer cooperation and coordination between international organizations and institutions. We believe that the Charter will also be an effective instrument with respect to the phenomenon of the so-called frozen conflicts.

The Istanbul summit took place at an important time in the development of the European security architecture. The adoption within the framework of the OSCE summit of the revised Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and of the updated Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures will significantly increase security and stability in this region.

Our country deems it particularly important that the new CFE Treaty strengthens the requirement that host countries must give consent for the deployment of foreign forces on their territory. This addresses the security of several of the newly independent countries, including Moldova.

From this point of view, we note with satisfaction the commitments by the Russian Federation, undertaken at the Istanbul summit, to withdraw and/or destroy its conventional armaments and equipment limited by the CFE Treaty by the end of 2001, and to complete the withdrawal of all Russian forces from the Republic of Moldova by the end of 2002.

These are solemn commitments. They are enshrined in the Final Declaration of the Summit, and we expect that they will be implemented in a timely manner and in good faith. I would like to emphasize that our Government welcomes the recent progress achieved in the removal and destruction of military equipment stockpiled in the eastern part of my country.

Given the considerable amount of ammunition that should be removed from Moldova or destroyed in the near future, international assistance is required. We are grateful to those OSCE countries that have indicated their readiness to contribute financially in this regard. In this context, the decision taken in Istanbul to expand the mandate of the OSCE mission in Moldova deserves the highest support from all members of the OSCE, as it is aimed at ensuring transparency and the coordination of financial assistance so as to facilitate the process of withdrawal and the destruction of ammunition and equipment.

My delegation appreciates the fact that the report of the Secretary-General gives due attention to the cooperation between United Nations peacekeeping missions, programmes and agencies and OSCE field missions in the newly independent countries which emerged from the former Soviet Union. It is a well-known fact that conflicts have created numerous problems for security throughout this region. They have undermined the consolidation of nation-building and state-building and the growth of democratic institutions in many of the newly independent States. They have provided numerous opportunities for outside parties to try to manipulate these conflicts to their own advantage. In short, these internal conflicts probably represent the most serious security threat of the past decade.

Despite the existence of an informal understanding that there is a division of labour between the two organizations, United Nations agencies and OSCE missions could, and should, in our opinion, discover new areas of cooperation in order to facilitate the settlement of the so-called frozen conflicts. Increased and continuing cooperation between them is much needed, especially in the case of my country, since, as President Petru Lucinschi indicated recently, there has been no tangible progress in resolving the problems in the eastern part of my country.

My delegation considers that in such a situation, we must be more insistent about using all the potential of the two organizations, without being unduly concerned about undermining the existing understanding about the so-called division of labour. We therefore welcome the fact that this year, at the local level, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Chisinau held regular discussions with the OSCE mission in Moldova regarding the situation in the Transdniester region. Thus, UNHCR, in close coordination with the OSCE mission and UNDP, has been promoting concrete measures to ensure the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and to support the efforts to reintegrate those who are unable to return home. At the same time, a new project, under UNDP auspices, is under consideration, the realization of which will increase the understanding between the inhabitants of the two banks of the Nistru River, who were separated by the 1992 conflict.

Ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe is facing new challenges. On the one hand, it is worth remembering that there are reasons for being optimistic. Europe is a far better place, and so is the whole world, as a result of the events which took place 10 years ago. On the other hand, regional conflicts that are still active,

as well as those that are frozen, threaten danger. We hope that the world in which the main framework for peace was a nuclear stand-off based on the threat of mutually assured destruction has become history.

Finally, on behalf of my Government, I would like to thank Norway and the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Knut Vollebaek, for their solid leadership of the OSCE during Norway's challenging term in office. I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Norway and his delegation for the excellent job they did here in New York. We look forward to working closely with the Permanent Representative of Austria, the representative of the incoming Chairman-in-Office.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I would like to make a very short statement in my capacity as the representative of my country, the incoming Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I am greatly honoured to address the General Assembly on this important agenda item concerning the relations between the United Nations and the OSCE. As a country with both United Nations and OSCE headquarters, Austria attaches very special importance to the relationship of the two Organizations. It is therefore natural that we should also be a sponsor of the draft resolution on the cooperation between the two Organizations, and I would like to make an appeal to all Members for the draft resolution to be adopted by consensus.

It is clear that our OSCE chairmanship will be one of our major foreign policy priorities and will be significantly marked by an active contribution to the solution of regional crises and conflicts in the OSCE region. We shall give special emphasis to strengthening the resources of the OSCE as a field organization, particularly in the area of conflict prevention, but also in crisis management and post-crisis rehabilitation.

In addition to the Balkans, the Caucasus will be a focal point of activities. Moreover, we will undertake efforts to integrate the Central Asian OSCE States more closely into the structures of the organization.

Within the framework of the human dimension, the Austrian chairmanship hopes to address issues such as the prevention of torture, children in armed conflicts, internally displaced persons and trafficking in human beings. We also plan to hold an OSCE seminar on the issue of children in armed conflict.

As we give special emphasis to strengthening the relations between the United Nations and the OSCE, we welcome the Secretary-General's report and his recent address to the OSCE Permanent Council. During our chairmanship, we will make every effort to further strengthen the close relationship between the OSCE and the United Nations.

In conclusion, we, like previous speakers, would like to commend the excellent work done by Norway as Chairman-in-Office and its Foreign Minister, Knut Vollebaek, and assure the new Secretary-General of the OSCE, Mr. Jan Kubis, of our full support.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus attaches particular importance to the inclusion on the agenda of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session of the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe". I wish in that connection to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, His Excellency Mr. Knut Vollebaek, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and to express our satisfaction at his comprehensive statement on the role and the significance of that cooperation. We also welcome the recent appointment of Mr. Ján Kubiš as Secretary-General of the OSCE.

On the threshold of the new millennium, cooperation between the United Nations as a universal forum for the peoples of the world and the OSCE as a pan-European regional organization is becoming increasingly important. We consider that the global efforts of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security and to bring about the progressive development of peoples, the settlement of conflicts and the solution of the problems currently being faced by countries and regions should be supplemented by relevant OSCE activities at the European regional level.

In that connection, we welcome the decisions taken at the recent Istanbul meeting of heads of State and Government of the States members of the OSCE. In our view, they strengthen the relationship between these two authoritative organizations. The documents adopted at the Istanbul summit envision clearly defined tasks and machinery for their implementation in the coming century. Belarus welcomes the principles laid down in the Charter for European Security, by which no single State or group of States may strengthen its security at the expense of the security of other States, by which there

shall be no new divisions among States, and by which the security of all neutral States shall be guaranteed so long as they do not enter into military alliances.

Also of great importance are the provisions of the Istanbul Charter for European Security reaffirming the role of the OSCE under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter and recognizing the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. This concept of the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE is in full conformity with the approach and position of the Republic of Belarus.

Key elements of the Istanbul Summit are the Charter for European Security, the Platform for Cooperative Security, the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and the OSCE Vienna Document 2000 on negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures. They underscore the desire of the OSCE to make every effort to strengthen trust, develop multilateral cooperation, good-neighbourliness and understanding, and safeguard the process of disarmament.

The Republic of Belarus trusts that we will see constant growth in the work of the OSCE as the principal mechanism for early warning, prevention and resolution of conflicts and for post-conflict peace-building in Europe. We welcome the participation of the OSCE in the peacekeeping process in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as part of the interim administration established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). In our view, the machinery set up to implement that resolution exemplifies the kind of measures that are necessary to ensure that the United Nations and the OSCE and other regional organizations join to achieve those noble purposes. A further element here is the territorial sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Republic of Belarus attaches great importance to the environment and to emergency assistance in humanitarian catastrophes and natural disasters as important areas for cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. In this context, further work by the OSCE and by the United Nations in this sphere should be guided by paragraph 29 of the Istanbul Summit Declaration and by the draft resolution to be considered at this session of the General Assembly on the strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

As a founding Member of the United Nations, the Republic of Belarus will endeavour to play an active role in promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations within the OSCE and the European continent. My country actively participates in the work of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus, which assists my country in promoting democratic reform. In that context, we are ready also to work towards a solution in Nagorny-Karabakh and to help in the convening of an international conference on that matter.

At the Istanbul OSCE summit, the President of Belarus, Mr. Alyaksandr Lukashenka, identified a number of areas in the economic, environmental and other security spheres in which Belarus will work in close cooperation with the other members of the OSCE to build a single nation of Europe based on tolerance, strengthened trust and the primacy of diplomacy and the rule of law. That is consonant with the most important imperative of the United Nations in its efforts to ensure prosperity for all the world's peoples.

My country looks forward to welcoming Austria as the next Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. I should like to inform members that a draft resolution under this item will be submitted at a later date.

Agenda item 23

Multilingualism

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/478)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.37)

The President: I call on the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.37.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*spoke in French*): It is my honour to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.37, on multilingualism, which was circulated on 1 December. The draft resolution is based on resolution 52/23 of 25 November 1997, which the General Assembly adopted by consensus.

I should like to announce that the following countries have joined the 69 original sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, the Central African Republic, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Egypt, Germany, India, Italy, Kuwait, Lesotho,

Lithuania, Oman, Qatar and Yemen. This brings the total number of sponsors to 88.

The French delegation wishes at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report.

The only element of draft resolution A/54/L.37 that differs from the text of resolution 52/23 is paragraph 2, which requests the Secretary-General to appoint a senior Secretariat official as coordinator of questions relating to multilingualism throughout the Secretariat.

Mr. Morel (Seychelles), Vice-President took the Chair.

In connection with this simple and very concrete innovation, I would like to make the following brief comments. First of all, the adoption of this draft resolution will have no budgetary implications. It is not a question of recruiting a new official whose role would be to coordinate questions relating to multilingualism; it is a question of appointing from among existing personnel — in other words, at no extra cost — an administrator who would serve as a contact point for delegations on questions relating to multilingualism within the Secretariat. I have in mind, *inter alia*, questions that arise regularly that relate to interpretation, publication of documents in the six official languages, the development of the United Nations Internet site and the training of staff members in the official and working languages. In addition to this official's other activities, he or she would see to it that answers are given to questions raised by delegations in these fields. Since questions that deal with multilingualism relate to many aspects of the functioning of the United Nations, it is important for personnel and delegations concerned about the equitable use of various languages to have a single interlocutor.

This draft, then, is in no way a change in the system now in force in the United Nations. It is completely in line with the constant efforts that have been made since the adoption of the United Nations Charter to maintain parity among the official languages and the working languages of the various organs and to respect the principle of equality of languages. This is one of the elements that gives richness to international life and contributes to the promotion of cultural diversity.

The coordinator of multilingualism will therefore have an important role to play in preparing the report of the Secretary-General that we request for the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

This is the objective of the draft resolution before the Assembly today. The list of sponsors of the draft attests to the importance that many Member States attach to this question. Multilingualism is, in fact, one of the key elements of the universal nature of this Organization.

Therefore, in conclusion, I express the hope that our Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The history of humanity shines with examples of human intellectual creativity. Such creativity reached its highest levels in science and knowledge. A quick overview of history shows that the science and knowledge created by world civilization, both ancient and modern, would not have reached us if not for the repository of knowledge and of the intellect, namely, language.

The languages of humanity have developed and have become varied throughout history. They are and will remain the main means of transmitting ideas and feelings among people. Such multilingualism has been enshrined in the United Nations in order to make sure that the voices of nations and peoples reach each other through language.

My country, Syria, was one of the first cradles of ancient civilizations and languages. The creativity that the first Syrian Phoenicians communicated through language reached the four corners of the world, and has now reached us, thousands of years later. From ancient Syria came the Cadmus alphabet, which developed the Phoenician alphabet and helped in creating the Phoenician language. From ancient Syria, as the Lebanese historian Jurji Zaydan says, the first alphabet in the world was launched: the alphabet of Ugarit, which was written on cuneiform tablets and was discovered in 1929. That discovery was one of the most important events for those concerned with linguistic and intellectual heritage.

When speaking of multilingualism, we must recall the role of the Arabic language during the process of human and intellectual development in the field of the liguistic aspect of civilization. As the historian Ahmad Dawoud of Syria says,

> "the Arabic language, ancient as it is in history, included in its family many languages, including Aramaic, Phoenician, Canaanite and Assyrian. As a historical recognition of the ancient Arabic language, one could recall as an example, that the name Europa was the name of a Syrian-Phoenician

princess. Further, the name Libya, a name used in the ancient world for the entire African continent, was also the name of a Syrian-Phoenician princess".

Major world historians, ancient and modern, have spoken of the role of the ancient Syrians in linguistic development. The Sicilian historian Teodoro stated that the Syrians invented letters and passed them on to the Canaanites, who in turn passed them on to the Greeks. Pliny, the historian states, "the creation of letters was a Phoenician achievement".

The chronicle of Sabatino Moscati states,

"The Phoenicians created the letters of the alphabet. One of the greatest and most glorious achievements of the Phoenicians, perhaps the most glorious, was spreading the alphabet in the countries of the Mediterranean basin".

More recently, the historian Arnold Toynbee said, "Syrians created the alphabet in the second century before Christ". George Botsford, the historian, states that "Phoenicians were the messengers of civilization in the ancient world. Their precious gift to Europe was the alphabet".

It was language that preserved that heritage and brought it to our modern age, the age of information and technological revolution.

Multilingualism is not limited to the importance of language itself and its modes of expression. Rather, there is unanimous agreement among historians today that linguistics is the best tool to determine demographic ethnic roots, the evolution of civilizations and the spread of intellectual knowledge to other parts of the world. Language is one of the main methods of establishing the national identity of a people. For language to undertake that role, it must survive through historic continuity. The Arabic language underwent such historic continuity and, thus, the Arab national identity has been kept for thousands of years in the form in which we know it today. We cherish our mother tongue, and that requires us to cherish the other languages of the world; millions of Arabs attempt to learn those languages, as well as the civilizational role that they played in human progress and continuity.

The addition of the Arabic language as an official language of the United Nations in 1974 was an important event that rightly reflected the widening use of Arabic, which is spoken and understood by millions of Arabs and non-Arabs. Multilingualism in the United Nations also requires a priori equality among the six official languages. Thus, my delegation has always demanded equal treatment of the six official languages of the United Nations. We have always believed that the United Nations must embody such equality in all aspects of its work, whether in United Nations documents, by providing translation and interpretation services to meetings, by ensuring the presence of enough translators and interpreters or on the United Nations page on the World Wide Web, so that the Arab world and Arab speakers in the world may come to know the positions of the Arab states vis-à-vis the different issues taken up by the United Nations.

My delegation has studied the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/54/478. We welcome the efforts made by the Secretary-General in following a comprehensive policy aimed at improving the linguistic capabilities of United Nations staff members by encouraging them to learn other United Nations languages, as well as in establishing a system of incentives by which the appointment and promotion of employees is influenced by their knowledge of other languages. We would like to express our satisfaction at the increase in the number of translators working on the computer-assisted translation project on an equal basis among the six languages and at other efforts aimed at ensuring full equality among the six official languages, in order to achieve true multilingualism.

The opening of the United Nations Web site in June 1995 was the beginning of a pilot project that manifested the will of the United Nations to make use of the latest scientific advances to diffuse the positions and policies of Member States throughout the world. That project embraced multilingualism in 1998, when, finally, the site included Arabic and Chinese pages. Thus, the United Nations achieved multilingualism on its Web page.

However, true multilingualism can be achieved only via the full and equal treatment on the Web site of the six official languages. Let us recall that more than one third of the inhabitants of our planet speak or understand either Arabic or Chinese.

Let us also recall that the system used for the Arabic language — both on the Web page and on the optical disk system — is obsolete. We hope that at this session, as a result of the consultations now under way in the Fifth Committee, the General Assembly will take a decision to correct this situation.

Finally, the languages of the world are the repositories of the cultural heritage of civilizations. Every civilization has a language to give it expression. Multilingualism at the United Nations is an expression of its recognition of the variety and multifaceted nature of cultures. Therefore, this multilingualism must continue and be promoted in the future, so that the United Nations can continue to enrich the cultural heritage of humanity and to reach out to as many of the world's people as possible.

Ms. Kaba Camara (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to take the floor on agenda item 23, "multilingualism", in order to make our contribution to the discussion on the role of languages and their importance within the United Nations system.

Language is the means of communication among peoples, civilizations and cultures. It carries the age-old values, the souls of peoples. It is an undeniable treasure that must be preserved, and interaction between the various languages allows them to flourish.

The United Nations, the melting pot of peoples, cultures, civilizations and customs, can only be enriched by the diversity of languages it employs. It is by promoting languages that the United Nations system can enhance the sensitivity of its approach to and analysis of problems it is seeking to solve, and can explore innovative ways of facing the many current challenges and those to come.

The multilingualism of the United Nations is a corollary of its universality. Our Organization's founders understood this when they decided, in February 1946, to make French an official and working language of our Assembly, its Committees and Subcommittees, and by including Spanish in December 1948. Through a 1968 Assembly resolution, Russian was added, and in December 1973, Chinese and Arabic were included on the list of official and working languages. Rule 51 of the General Assembly rules of procedure states that these five languages, in addition to English, are the official and working languages of the General Assembly.

Nonetheless, we note with concern that the increasing globalization and unipolarity are having an increasing effect on the United Nations system and run the risk of leading to the pre-eminence of a single language, which would be imposed as an unavoidable channel for communication among the world's peoples.

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General, who, aware of this danger and of the need to promote all the official languages, is endeavouring to make multilingualism the rule within the United Nations. We appreciate the programmes to provide instruction in the six official languages and the incentives for staff to study these languages so as to be proficient in at least two of them. We are well aware of the Department of Public Information's efforts to develop Internet sites in all the official languages of the United Nations, and we commend these efforts. The implementation of this project, which we vigorously urge, will allow the vast majority of peoples throughout the world to have access, in their working language, to information and documents issued by the United Nations. It will help bring peoples and the United Nations closer together, and will contribute to an increased understanding of our activities.

However, while progress has been achieved in the areas of language instruction and the dissemination of information, it must be acknowledged that progress has been slow in the areas of recruitment and promotion of staff, the use of working languages and the translation and simultaneous distribution of basic documents, as well as in providing informal meetings with adequate interpretation and translation services.

Paragraph 7 of the report contained in document A/54/478 states that

> "All candidates recruited for the Secretariat are required to have a full command of either English or French."

Nonetheless, we note that many vacancy announcements state that, in order to be a candidate, one must have excellent spoken and written English and a working knowledge of French or of one of the other official languages. Representatives will agree that such requirements exclude the vast majority of nationals from Member States of the United Nations who were not raised or educated in an Anglo-Saxon culture.

This result of this trend is that brilliant candidates who could offer our Organization new sensibilities, approaches and ideas are excluded from competing for posts. In taking firm measures to reverse this trend, the Secretary-General will enrich his administration with skills that might bring innovative ideas for tackling the challenges that the United Nations must deal with.

Regarding the working languages, the report mentions that all United Nations staff members must, according to the terms of appointment, work either in

English or in French. However, the preponderant working language is English. Staff members of all types are often required to draft reports in English.

The translation and simultaneous distribution of documentation in all working languages continue to pose problems. The late distribution of documents in all working languages does not allow for sufficient study and is a serious handicap to the active participation of certain delegations in the work of our Assembly. Often, assigned schedules are not met and important documents are circulated with the "advance copy" stamp, thus giving those who work in English the privilege of studying them, developing their ideas thereon and making their positions known before others have even had an opportunity to see them. Indeed, the current debate on reform of the United Nations Development Programme is an illustration of the difficulties encountered by representatives who are not fluent in English.

Moreover, we should draw the attention of the translation service to the need for texts in English to concord with those in the other working languages, because the English version, which is often the original, occasionally differs from the translations.

Interpretation at informal meetings or at meetings of the regional groups remains a constant problem. An important meeting of the non-aligned countries was held last week without interpretation services. Participants who could not express themselves in English were compelled to refrain from speaking on important items on the agenda. When we consider the importance of these meetings to the arrival at consensus in the negotiation process, it is to be regretted that interpretation services are not always available. Serious efforts should be made to allow all representatives, whatever their working language, to participate actively in the debate and to make their contribution to the work of our Assembly.

My delegation encourages the Secretary-General in his efforts to achieve gender parity in the allocation of management posts. However, we note that this parity is being sought at the expense of the vast majority of women, who often find themselves disqualified, not by criteria of competence or morality, but simply because of history and occasionally of geography. While we advocate priority being given to Africa within the United Nations system, African women, especially French speakers, who occupy high-level positions remain rare gems in the system in this waning century.

Similarly, much remains to be done to ensure linguistic and geographic balance, because we must not lose sight of the fact that wisdom, deep consideration and thought and an innovative approach to the problems of this world are not the monopoly of a single culture, region or language.

At the dawn of the new millennium, let us make the rule of multilingualism a reality in the years to come. Steps must be taken to allow each and every State to enjoy the rights and facilities inherent to membership. My delegation is in favour of appointing a coordinator of questions relating to multilingualism assigned to reducing inequalities and promoting the universal character of our Organization. We therefore urge the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution in document A/54/L.37 without a vote.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): The Principality of Monaco — whose official language is French; whose vernacular, Monegasque, is successfully taught in schools; and above all on whose territory many languages are spoken in harmony — is unreservedly in favour of multilingualism. Indeed, we feel the benefits of multilingualism every day in business and industry, as well as in entertainment and tourism.

Advocated from the very outset by our Organization and officially recognized in Article 111 of its Charter, as well as in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the other main organs of the United Nations, the use of several languages within the Secretariat and in the official framework of cooperation among Member States undeniably represents a unique treasure and a precious asset in our international relations that it is our duty to preserve with utmost attention and consistency.

Is multilingualism not at the very heart of the meeting of peoples? Is it not fitting recognition of the identities they have evolved over the course of centuries? Whether sheltering in caves, roaming the deserts, hunting in the savannah or dwelling in the forests, all human beings have developed their trade and built their progress on the knowledge of others, their culture and identity. Is not the use of many languages, the ancestral means of communication, at the very heart of human relations? Has it not thereby contributed to the creation and defence of their spiritual values, their norms of behaviour and, undoubtedly, the rejection of the savagery of our early history?

The widespread and consistent use of languages — a bridge rather than a barrier between peoples — is our common good. We must unite to safeguard and value it as we do the artistic and architectural legacies of preceding generations.

The draft resolution introduced by the representative of France, and of which Monaco is a sponsor, should mark an important phase in this undertaking, since it completes the text of resolution 52/23 of 25 November 1997. By requesting the Secretary-General — as recommended in November 1998 by the symposium on multilingualism in international organizations, held in Geneva at the initiative of the International Organization of la Francophonie — to appoint a senior Secretariat official as coordinator and liaison with Member States on all issues related to multilingualism, the draft resolution is intended to provide a concrete solution to what many of us clearly feel to be a deficiency. This initiative, which would have no budgetary implication, since the official would already be a member of the Secretariat, is most relevant. It would also be extremely useful in giving concrete shape to measures already taken by the Secretary-General to promote multilingualism in our Organization, which he describes in his report of 19 October 1999 in document A/54/478 and which we wholeheartedly endorse.

Whether because of the incentives established to foster within the Secretariat the study of the six official languages or the provisions adopted regarding recruitment and promotion, there is every reason to believe that this question, which seems to be the object of sustained attention by the Secretary-General, could only benefit from this appointment, whose importance, I am convinced, Member States should soon be able to perceive.

The note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/54/28 of 16 November 1999 is another contribution to our consideration of careers in the linguistic services, enabling us to better understand some of the difficulties he encounters regarding the appointment of language personnel. It also makes us aware of the very uneven yet nevertheless encouraging results of provisions aimed at reducing the excessive vacancy rates, particularly in offices away from Headquarters. Incentive measures aimed at facilitating the recruitment of qualified and experienced language personnel should, we strongly hope, also contribute to rapidly reducing these gaps. We can only invite the Secretary-General, who is himself multilingual, to pursue these efforts by developing or strengthening the use of the latest informatics technologies, with a view to improving the quality of translation and to increase productivity in the processing of certain repetitive texts, thanks in particular to a greater standardization and the automation of some tasks.

In the field of information, where the role of languages is predominant, in order to make world public opinion widely aware of the role and activities of the Organization, progress should also be pursued, above all regarding the Web, where we note with satisfaction the progress made — too slow, but steady nonetheless — as a result of adjustments made to programmes and greater accessibility in the six official languages.

We also hope that the current trilingual Thesaurus File of the United Nations Bibliographic Information System will soon be available in the six official languages of the Organization, with the addition of Arabic, Chinese and Russian in the near future. This will be a decisive step in promoting knowledge of the varied wealth of literary and artistic works of our world.

The Government of Monaco considers respect for multilingualism, which is one of the fundamental principles of the functioning of the United Nations, as a guarantee of fair and fruitful cooperation among Member States. Moreover, its strengthening should be a source of intellectual and ideological enrichment, which is increasingly vital for making our Organization better able to embrace the essence of, and be imbued with the beauty, authenticity and depth of, our various cultures. This should contribute to finding appropriate solutions to the grave problems of our day, such as violence, marginalization, poverty and indifference, problems that are too often related to ignorance and disrespect for others.

Mr. Pintat Santolária (Andorra)(*spoke in French*): Since its admission to the United Nations, the Principality of Andorra has always used its own language, Catalan, in its statements before the General Assembly. This is not a sign of nationalist fervour, but rather a deliberate decision with two very specific objectives. The first objective is the broadest possible dissemination of United Nations activities among our population. The second objective is to promote multilingualism at the United Nations. In fact, the cultural wealth and diversity of our world are expressed above all in the language we speak and write. Using the language of each nation during the general debate is not very difficult. Andorra provides a translation into one of the six official languages of the United Nations, and the simultaneous interpretation is based on that version.

Today I would like to encourage most countries to speak in the languages of their populations during the general debate. Next year we will be celebrating the Millennium Assembly together. This will be an opportunity to prove that speaking different languages should not be a barrier to bringing people together; quite the contrary. The world of the next century will not be a Tower of Babel of human beings who cannot understand each other. The culture of peace, human rights, democracy and rule of law is asserting itself, little by little, and will become universal. Henceforth, languages must be understood as expressions of specific cultural heritages that enrich humankind, united by the shared values of which this Assembly is the echo and guarantor.

It will not be by speaking a single language that the world's peoples will be united in spirit. Many languages disappear every year because of globalization. This means cultural impoverishment. The globalization of the decades to come will be an opportunity for us to bring our ideas closer together while maintaining different means of expression. Allow me to congratulate the fraternal country of San Marino, which financed the translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into many of the world's languages.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

As in the past, the Principality of Andorra has co-sponsored a draft resolution on multilingualism. We congratulate the Secretary-General on his report on this subject, and we commend the efforts made by the United Nations to promote the six official languages among staff members. It seems to us particularly effective that United Nations staff who strive to learn more languages should benefit from financial incentives. We should certainly congratulate the interpreters and translators, who, in their booths and offices, work tirelessly to facilitate the communication and the work of Member States. We should ensure that at international conferences the translation of legal documents, in particular, is always of a very high standard. We are pleased to note advances made by the Organization in the area of informatics in order to help us navigate the Internet in many languages. The use of computers cannot be allowed to impose the use of a single language, and it is very important for the Organization to always stress multilingualism in this area.

(*spoke in Catalan*)

Andorra is small State with three systems of education: Andorran, French and Spanish. The latter can be lay or religious. We believe it is essential that Andorrans continue to be trilingual, and now, with English, that they be quadrilingual. As we see it, for Andorra, a small country, languages are a means of openness and contact with others, first with our neighbours and then with the rest of the world.

Andorra is and always has been at a crossroads, and that makes it a place of trade and mutual assistance. Economic exchange is founded on a strong knowledge of neighbouring cultures and languages. People of more than 85 nationalities now reside in Andorra. We are familiar with multilingualism, and we like it. Even as we preserve our own language, the citizens of Andorra are today a laboratory of a Europe that is uniting, in which each nation preserves its own language but whose inhabitants also become multilingual through a natural process. That multilingualism is the natural bearer of tolerance and mutual respect.

(*spoke in English*)

Human beings recognize the many powers of words and of languages. The sacred texts of the great religions are infused for many with the truth of God. Works of history, science, literature and philosophy by the great masters have fed our thirst for knowledge for generations. In the twentieth century, deconstruction and post-modernism have brought a new wave of analysis to seemingly plain texts. Words and languages define human beings as thinking beings. They are what we are, and they express what we want. Let us celebrate their diversity at the United Nations, a true home for all nations, large and small.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I wish to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for the quality of his report, which reflects exhaustively the importance and necessity of promoting multilingualism at the United Nations.

It is also a great pleasure for me to welcome and support from this rostrum the promotion of multilingualism in all its aspects in the work of the United Nations. My delegation decided to co-sponsor the draft resolution on multilingualism, because it seems vital to us to maintain and develop the cultural and linguistic richness of the United Nations. In order to facilitate citizens' access to the United Nations and its agencies, it is essential to offer that access in all the official languages of the United Nations.

While globalization and the Internet seem to promote the emergence of a *lingua franca*, we must not forget one important fact: it is the obligation of the United Nations to avoid accepting only privileged groups of society. It is essential that all sectors of society be respected. In any event, we must avoid transforming the United Nations into a privileged club. Multilingualism should be considered a fundamental pillar of the United Nations. If we weaken that pillar, we will weaken the entire Organization.

Today, the success of the United Nations work depends also on the quality of its cooperation with civil society, and in particular with the non-governmental organizations. It is often the small local initiatives that provide us with frank and genuine information. Multilingualism is indispensable to the success of the cooperation between the United Nations and such organizations.

The United Nations budgetary situation, as we know full well, remains precarious. In this context, I would like to emphasize that the appointment by the Secretary-General of a high-level official, chosen from within existing Secretariat personnel to serve as coordinator and as a contact point between the Secretariat and Member States on questions related to multilingualism, is a measure that will have no budgetary implications. I wish to emphasize that the appointment of such a coordinator seems highly innovative and reasonable to us.

In conclusion, it would be desirable for the draft resolution under this item, which is consistent with the existing language system, to be given the active support of a very large number of countries.

Mr. Erdös (Hungary) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Hungary welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on multilingualism. It rightly emphasizes the importance of the study and use of languages — "languages", in the plural — to better reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the United Nations and, in fact, of our world. We see from the report that our world Organization places particular emphasis on the teaching and use of the official languages of the United Nations in its various spheres of activity. The reform of the United Nations, which began some years ago, is basically aimed at translating world realities into fact, and this means, *inter alia*, the maintenance and strengthening of a linguistic balance within the United Nations.

In this context, we attach great importance to the activities of the Department of Public Information, which is the United Nations body *par excellence* aimed at raising public awareness in our various countries of the multicultural nature and linguistic diversity of the United Nations, not only through the use of the Organization's working and official languages, but also, with the assistance of the United Nations Information Centres, through the use of the languages of the countries served by those Centres. In this way, people in the four corners of the world will be better able to appreciate the true dimensions of the work accomplished by the United Nations and to identify with that work. They will understand that the United Nations remains the foremost place of expression for the diversity of cultures making up the international community and, to a certain extent for the linguistic diversity of our world — and not for uniformity, monotony or intellectual intolerance.

The Secretariat's faithfulness to the policy of promoting teaching and using the working and official languages of the United Nations in all fields is fundamental for multilingualism and parity among languages to remain the rule at the United Nations, and we expect these activities to continue.

Hungary has joined an impressive number of countries in sponsoring the draft resolution before the General Assembly, which relates to preserving the value of multilingualism in the Secretariat. We do so in a spirit of openness, because I represent — as do many of my colleagues — a nation whose language is not included among the official or working languages, a nation where these official or working languages are not used, not even as a secondary language or a language of administration. While remaining devoted to our own language, culture and traditions, we are fully aware of the importance of the international community's making itself understood and of its communicating through the rich linguistic resources that the peoples of our world possess; and this can be done rationally only on an agreed basis, as established in Article 111 of the United Nations Charter. We have no doubt that our colleagues here who think, reflect and communicate in the greatest diversity of languages, will be sensitive to the idea of the plurality of languages and that they will rightly appreciate the message contained in this draft resolution, which we recommend for their kind consideration.

Mr. Lozinsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As has been repeatedly pointed out by the General Assembly, the use of various languages in the United Nations enriches the Organization and is a means for achieving the purposes of the Charter. The States

Members of the Organization regularly reaffirm the need to ensure equitable treatment for official and working languages of the Organization.

The existence and status of official and working languages in the United Nations reflect the universal nature of the Organization and, consequently, the cultural diversity of the world community. The importance of this is obvious, especially at the threshold of the new millennium.

Experience gleaned over the decades has shown that the United Nations has been able to strike an extremely successful balance between the need for a fuller reflection of the world's linguistic and cultural variety and considerations of ensuring the working efficiency of the machinery of the Organization. It is precisely this factor, among others, that has promoted the harmonious integration of the United Nations into the practical activities of many countries, far exceeding the number of founders of the Organization.

The principle of the equality of official and working languages, which has been legally strengthened and which has stood the test of time, must be regularly reaffirmed by the General Assembly. In practice this means that we must ensure equitable services to States Members, both in terms of quantity and quality, in all official and working languages.

Proceeding from this premise, and also on the basis of decisions adopted by the General Assembly in 1995 and 1997 on this item, the Russian delegation supports the draft resolution on multilingualism, of which it is a sponsor.

We support a new element in the draft resolution — a request from the General Assembly to the Secretary-General to appoint a senior Secretariat official as coordinator of questions relating to multilingualism. Such a decision, which does not involve any financial implications, will allow, within the framework of Secretariat structures, coordination of the work on problems of multilingualism and ensure compliance with the principle of equality of official and working languages. It will also formally enhance responsibility for the implementation by United Nations machinery of compliance with the relevant decisions of the General Assembly.

Mr. Belfort (Haiti) *(spoke in French):* It is my honour, on behalf of the Haitian delegation, to speak in support draft resolution A/54/L.37, on multiliingualism in the various organs and bodies of the United Nations.

The question of multilingualism is of great importance in these times of the historic upheaval known as "globalization", which is characterized, from a linguistic standpoint, by the steady establishment of a new lingua franca. This process undoubtedly provides the community of nations with a convenient tool for communication. History has taught us that this phenomenon is nothing new, since many languages have fulfilled that function in the past at the regional and global levels; in terms of religious beliefs, the Bible tells us that in the time of Noah all the earth spoke one language. Nonetheless, we cannot avoid asking ourselves some questions about this process insofar as it relates to a subject of concern to us all: that of linguistic and cultural diversity. This preoccupation is not solely for esthetes striving to be original; it stems from an obvious concern over human and cultural ecology with a view to preserving this diversity, which is the main source of the richness of our human heritage.

The great Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes recently said that the great value of the twenty-first century will be diversification, because if we reflect on our memory, we discover that its roots are not single, but multiple.

At the opening ceremony on multilingualism in international organizations, held in Geneva in November 1998, the Secretary-General of the International Organization of La Francophonie, Mr. Boutro Boutros-Ghali, stated that if all States were to speak the same language, think the same way and act the same way, there would be a great risk of a totalitarian system establishing itself on an international scale, because through the words that are used, a way of thinking and a vision of the world are expressed. This thought is accurate, because language is, above all a reflection of cultures and civilizations. The choice and the decision to promote multilingualism represent not only a desire to invest in diversity, but also a desire to initiate and deepen the needed dialogue among civilizations.

The Haitian delegation has duly noted the report contained in document A/54/478, on multilingualism, and we thank the Secretary-General deeply for the wealth of information it contains. We have also noted with satisfaction that instructions have been given to develop the content of the United Nations Web site in all the official languages. This decision can only help promote

multilingualism on the Internet, in the spirit of resolution 50/11 of 2 November 1995.

We are pleased to note that the Secretariat is doing everything in its power to encourage staff to use the working languages on an equal footing in their official communications. Nonetheless, in spite of the clear will expressed by the Secretary-General, we cannot help noting that the principle of equality of official languages continues to undergo a certain amount of erosion contrary to the spirit of resolution 50/11 since the great majority of informal meetings continue to be held without interpretation.

Of course we know that the world Organization is facing a certain number of financial problems, but the question of multilingualism, in spite of or because of the process of globalization, will grow and grow in value as an expression of the diversity and the wealth of humankind's cultural and intellectual heritage, which the United Nations must preserve.

In this context, it is relevant, as set out in paragraph 2 of resolution A/54/L.37, to request the Secretary-General to appoint a coordinator on questions relating to multilingualism. This appointment obviously will have no budgetary implications for the United Nations since the choice will be made from among senior Secretariat officials.

The Haitian delegation therefore invites the General Assembly to support the draft resolution on multilingualism, which will serve as a driving force for the establishment of genuine dialogue among civilizations.

The Acting President *(spoke in French):* We have heard the last speaker in our debate on this item.

Before taking a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.37, I wish to announce that Colombia and Saudi Arabia have joined the list of sponsors.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.37?

Draft resolution A/54/L.37 was adopted (resolution 54/64).

The Acting President *(spoke in French):* I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): Although my delegation joined in the consensus on draft resolution A/54/L.37, under agenda item 23, entitled "Multilingualism", we wish to stress that we continue to have strong reservations on paragraph 3 of resolution 50/11, of 2 November 1995. It is our belief that this paragraph has far-reaching implications for personnel matters at the United Nations, particularly for the recruitment and promotion of staff.

To require United Nations personnel to have a command of two of the six official languages of the United Nations places at a great disadvantage those individuals whose mother tongue is not one of those six languages. For these United Nations personnel, such a measure would not only be an additional obstacle to overcome, but also a latent form of discrimination.

Thailand remains committed to multilingualism at the United Nations and to efforts to enhance cultural diversity in this almost-universal body. But we should not forget that at the core of cultural diversity are the principles of tolerance and mutual understanding. In the context of this agenda item, tolerance and understanding, especially from those who promote the idea of multilingualism, should also be extended to those cultures that, through their historical circumstances, have not been deeply associated with the six official languages of the United Nations. It would indeed be unfortunate if the implementation of multilingualism should inadvertently lead to what could be perceived as intolerance and, consequently, to the degradation of the idea of respect for cultural diversity, which multilingualism is supposed to promote.

Mr. Yamagiwa (Japan): Japan reluctantly joined the consensus adoption of the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.37 and wishes to take this opportunity to explain and reiterate its fundamental position on the issue of multilingualism, and in particular its implication for the staff members in the United Nations Secretariat.

Japan supports the concept of multilingualism, whose ultimate objective is to enhance and promote

cultural diversity within the United Nations Secretariat. The United Nations is a unique Organization in that it is both international and universal, and we are of the view that that unique character should be maintained and enhanced. Unfortunately, the General Assembly resolution that initiated multilingualism — resolution 50/11 — contained an element that my delegation regards as a possible basis for treating staff members whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages of the United Nations bodies in an unfair manner.

It is for this reason that the delegation of Japan had to vote against the adoption of that resolution at the fiftieth session of the Assembly. As the circumstances have not changed since then, my delegation would like to reiterate its concern, as well as its request to the Secretary-General, and the coordinator who is to be appointed, to ensure that those staff members of the Secretariat whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages of the United Nations bodies are treated in the same way as other staff members with regard to the process of consideration for promotion and salary increments.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 23?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded our deliberations in the language of Molière. I shall now proceed in the language of Shakespeare.

Agenda item 167

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Draft resolution (A/54/L.48)

The Acting President: Members will recall that draft resolution A/54/L.5 and the amendments thereto contained in document A/54/L.10 have been withdrawn by the sponsors.

I now give the floor to the representative of Austria to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.48.

Ms. Schneebauer (Austria): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.48, on agenda item 167, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization", which is now before the General Assembly. I would like to announce that Kenya and Spain have become sponsors of the draft resolution.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty of 24 September 1996 prohibits any nuclear-weapon test explosion and any other nuclear explosion. In its preamble, the States parties to the Treaty recognize that the cessation of all nuclear-weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions, by constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons, constitutes an effective measure of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. Thus, the Treaty will contribute to the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization was established in New York on 19 November 1996 at the first Meeting of States Signatories to the Treaty. The headquarters of the Preparatory Commission for the Organization is in Vienna. The Commission was established for the purpose of carrying out the necessary preparations for the effective implementation of the Treaty, including ensuring the operationalization of the Treaty's verification regime at entry into force. The Commission established a Provisional Technical Secretariat, which took up its work on 17 March 1997 at the headquarters of the Commission, in Vienna.

In accordance with paragraph 7 of the text on the establishment of the Commission, the Commission has the authority to negotiate and enter into agreements. The Treaty itself provides for the conclusion of an agreement with the United Nations. The Treaty also provides for the utilization of existing expertise and facilities and for maximizing cost efficiencies through cooperative arrangements with other international organizations.

In the light of the foregoing, the Commission adopted on 22 April 1999 the decision on an agreement to regulate the relationship between the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty Organization and the United Nations. The fourth preambular paragraph of draft

resolution A/54/L.48 would reaffirm this decision, which provides for consultations between the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Organization's Preparatory Committee and all interested signatory States.

In the process of preparing the draft resolution, Austria held consultations with the United Nations Secretariat and the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

The draft resolution would invite the Secretary-General to take the appropriate steps to conclude such an agreement between the United Nations and the CTBT Preparatory Commission. According to the operative paragraph of the draft resolution, the agreement would be implemented after its approval by the General Assembly.

The conclusion of this agreement is an issue of great urgency. In the process of carrying out the necessary preparations for the effective implementation of the Treaty, the 321 monitoring stations of the International Monitoring System, to be hosted by about 90 States, will have to be either newly built or upgraded to a common standard. The Commission is currently intensifying the process of establishing the Treaty's verification regime, which must be capable of meeting the verification requirements of the Treaty at its entry into force.

In this process, the Commission is seeking to use existing expertise by cooperating with other international organizations, as provided for by the Treaty. Cooperation with the United Nations and with its programmes and specialized agencies is crucial for the successful preparation of the entry into force of the Treaty. Such cooperation with United Nations programmes and organs, as well as with United Nations specialized agencies, will be greatly facilitated by the conclusion of an agreement regulating the relationship between the United Nations and the Commission.

My delegation therefore hopes that draft resolution A/54/L.48 will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/54/L.48.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.48.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.48?

Draft resolution A/54/L.48 was adopted (resolution 54/65).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Al-Hariri (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to reaffirm its position and reservations with respect to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We have consistently stated that such an important and sensitive instrument as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), with its potential repercussions for all Member States, can in no way overlook the legitimate concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States, which constitute the overwhelming majority of the countries of the world. Those countries have no assurances against the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons against them, nor are they allowed to obtain the sophisticated technologies needed for their development.

The Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) shows clearly that nuclear-weapon States have no desire whatsoever to eliminate their arsenals of nuclear weapons. Important and accurate comments were made on the substance of the Treaty showing that there was no commitment by nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their arsenals in a reasonable period of time. Furthermore, there was no clear reference to the illegitimacy of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

In addition, there was no set time-frame for ensuring the universality of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Treaty is limited to prohibiting nuclear explosions, not laboratory nuclear tests, the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, or the production of new weapon systems. The on-site monitoring and inspection regime could open the way to the misuse of national data and to its arbitrary use for political purposes.

Perhaps the strangest thing in the text is the fact that signatories to the Treaty are allowed to take measures against non-signatories. These may include measures taken by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, which would violate the sovereign right of States to choose whether or not to accede to a particular treaty.

Syria believes that these are very serious issues, particularly the unprecedented inclusion of Israel on the list of the countries of the Middle East and of South Asia. The volatile situation in the Middle East is due to the fact that Israel alone possesses nuclear weapons and continues to develop them qualitatively and quantitatively while refusing to accede to the NPT or to place all of its weapons and installations under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, thereby hampering all efforts to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. By so doing, Israel is exposing the Middle East to the dangers of its nuclear capability, which is not under any international oversight.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation joined the consensus on the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.48 on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization". This does not mean, however, that my country agrees with the way the Treaty was formulated.

In this regard, my delegation would like to reaffirm the statement made by the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya during the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in September 1996. Libya's position, enunciated repeatedly in all international forums, calls for the genuine and effective elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in view of their destructive capability and effects that cannot be limited in time or space.

My country continues to believe that the formulation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty does not fulfil the aspirations of all peoples — that is, the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and nuclear tests. It does not contain a specific timetable for the elimination of the nuclear arsenals, which are the monopoly of a few. The Treaty consolidates faits accomplis and bars the way to the establishment of a world free from nuclear terror.

Libya supports the comprehensive, effective and genuine prohibition of all nuclear tests and all nuclear weapons. Libya does not accept half-solutions when it comes to the survival of humankind.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 167?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President in the Chair.

The President: I should like to draw the attention of the Assembly to document A/INF/54/3/Add.4, which has been distributed to delegations. The document contains the tentative programme of work and schedule of plenary meetings of the General Assembly.

The lists of speakers for items mentioned in document A/INF/54/3/Add.4 are now open. In due course, the General Assembly will be informed of the dates for the consideration of other agenda items as well as of any additions or changes.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.